

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for sharing resources between first and second workstations separated by a segment of a public network, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting a message from said first workstation to said second workstation separated from said first workstation by at least one security measure and disposed within a destination computing site;

employing a protocol to enable said transmitted message to penetrate said at least one security measure; and

executing a command included in said transmitted email message.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said message is an email message and said protocol is SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol)

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of executing said command comprises the step of:

enabling an SMTP server dedicated to said second workstation to automatically perform at least one operation selected from a group of extensive operations.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said executing step comprises the step of: performing an operation on data other than said transmitted message.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of: at said second workstation, verifying an identity of said first workstation.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one security measure is a firewall.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising the step of:

disposing said destination computing site within a controlled-access network.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of:

disposing said firewall in between said public network and said controlled-access network.

9. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of:

attaching an executable file to said message, wherein said executing step comprises the step of:

executing said attached executable file.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein said executing step comprises the step of:

executing a routine resident in said controlled-access network identified in said message.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said step of executing comprises the step of:

running a diagnostic program at said second workstation.

12. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

identifying said included command employing at least one script recognizable to said second workstation

13. The method of claim 1 wherein said executing step comprises the step of:

performing an operation on a document attached to said transmitted email message.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein said executing step comprises the step of:  
performing an operation on a document resident within said destination computing  
site.

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15. A system for securely enabling resource sharing among a plurality of workstations over a public network, the system comprising:

means for transmitting a message from a first workstation of said plurality of workstations onto said public network;

5 means for enabling said transmitted email message to pass through a firewall separating said public network from a workstation disposed in communication with a controlled-access network coupled to said public network;

means for receiving said transmitted email message at said second workstation;

10 means for verifying an authorization of said first workstation to request execution of a selected function at said second workstation; and

means for automatically performing said selected function at said second workstation if said authorization of said first workstation is verified.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein said message is an email message.

17. The system of claim 15 wherein said means for enabling comprises:  
an SMTP port for enabling communication of said message through said firewall.

18. The system of claim 15 further comprising:  
an email server dedicated to said second workstation; and  
means for enabling communication between said dedicated email server and said second workstation.

19. The system of claim 15 wherein said means for verifying said authorization comprises:

means for generating a digital signature at said first workstation; and

means for decrypting said digital signature at said second workstation.

20. The system of claim 15 wherein said means for automatically performing comprises:

means for running an executable file attached to said message.

21. The system of claim 15 wherein said means for automatically performing comprises:

means for running an executable file identified in said message and resident in said controlled-access network.

22. The system of claim 15 wherein said means for automatically performing comprises:

means for performing an operation on a document attached to said message.

23. A system for causing a function to be performed at a destination computing site remote from a requesting computing site, the system comprising:

an email composer disposed in communication with a requesting computing site for composing an email message including a task description and data authenticating said requesting computing site;

a network link for enabling transmission of said composed email message;

a mail gateway disposed in communication with said destination computing site for receiving said transmitted composed email;

a mail server dedicated to a destination computing device disposed within said destination computing site for identifying said task description;

means for verifying said authenticating data; and

means for executing said described task where said authenticating data is verified.

24. The system of claim 23 wherein said authenticating data includes a digital signature.

25. The system of claim 23 wherein said destination computing site is coupled to a local area network.